

Documentary Video Boot Camp

MPFV225, January 4-8, 2010, 1.5 Credits

Description

A one-week, immersive, hands-on learning experience for students who want to learn the fundamentals of video documentary in an intimate and focused setting. Participants will develop an understanding of shooting techniques, picture composition, lighting, interviewing, and editing with Final Cut Express.¹

The class will guide students through a series of assignments using traditional, personal, and cinéma vérité approaches. Through exercises, screening, discussion, and critique, students will be exposed to a range of storytelling, aesthetic, and artistic issues. This class will provide students who want to share stories of social reality, with a strong foundation to build upon.

Class Meetings

Class meets in South 305 on Monday, January 4 through Friday, January 8, 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., an optional (highly recommended) editing lab will run on Thursday, January 7, 5:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Prerequisites

Basic familiarity with Macintosh or Windows computers is required. Macintosh computers will be used for editing assignments. Prior experience with video production or editing is not required, however, some experience is helpful.

Instructor

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Course Objectives

Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:

- Discuss in broad strokes the historical trends in documentary film, define what a documentary is, and describe the fundamental modes of documentary film
- Apply basic camera, sound recording, and editing techniques to observe people and processes and to present ideas in the form of a short documentary film

Classroom Procedures

The classroom will be used for lecture, discussion and practice. Since this is an intensive class with several assignments that involve production, students will also use people, resources, and studios in and around the MassArt campus to complete their assignments. Students are expected to treat the classroom as a safe place for open expression and discussion and to treat their fellow students with courtesy and respect at all times.

Grading/Evaluation/Attendance

Grading is on a pass/fail basis. Active participation in class discussion and critique is very important. Assignments will be evaluated on the basis of organization and technique.

Completion of class requirements will be determined by the following: Participation in class discussion and critique: 40%, assignments 60%.

Given the intense nature of the class, missing a half day puts the course grade in jeopardy. Missing one day will result in not passing.

¹ Everything you learn using Final Cut Express is applicable to Final Cut Pro (bundled with Final Cut Studio)

Class Schedule

The following schedule is only a starting point and may be adjusted during the course of the week based on dynamics of the class.

Monday

- Introductions: Why are we here?
- Discussion: What is Documentary?
- Screening and discussion
- Demonstration: Documentary Camerawork and Recording Sound, Part 1: On camera sound
- Demonstration: Observing People and Documenting Process
- Practice: Plan and shoot Assignment 1 (document a process and observe a person)

Tuesday

- Screening and Critique of Assignment 1
- Presentation: Conducting Interviews
- Screening and discussion
- Demonstration: Lighting an Interview and Recording Sound, Part 2: using boom microphones and lavalieres
- Practice: Plan and shoot Assignment 2 (conduct an interview)

Wednesday

- Screening and Critique of Assignment 2
- Presentation: Directing the Documentary
- Screening and discussion
- Practice: Plan and shoot Assignment 3 (shoot a mini-documentary)

Thursday

- Screening and Critique of Assignment 3 (selected rushes)
- Presentation: Editing the Documentary
- Screening and discussion
- Tutorial: Editing with Final Cut Express Part 1
- Practice: Assignment 4: Capture and begin editing footage shot during Assignment 3 (it is highly recommended to take advantage of the optional editing lab tonight)

Friday

- Tutorial: Editing with Final Cut Express Part 2
- Practice: Assignment 4: continue editing
- Practice: Creating a DVD with iDVD (optional, if time permits)
- Demonstration: Posting video to the Web (optional, if time permits)
- Screening and Critique of Assignment 4
- Sunset review

Handouts

- Assignment Descriptions
- Camera (online presentation & notes)
- Notes on the interview (online)
- Lighting (online presentation & notes)
- Sound (online presentation & notes)
- Editing with Final Cut Express
- Editing the Documentary
- Documentary reading list
- Documentary viewing list

Access the latest version of the handouts and related links and resources on the class page at: <http://Kino-Eye.com/dvb/>

Technical Requirements

Students are required to bring to class 1 miniDV tape, a USB Flash Drive, and several blank DVD-R disks. Optionally, students should bring an external FireWire drive if they would like to take their project file and media home with them.

All equipment required to complete assignments will be provided, however, students are encouraged to bring their own digital video camcorder and use it during the class in order to work towards mastery of their own camera. Please contact the instructor to determine if your camera is suitable for use in this class.